



PRESS RELEASE

IGAD, UNHCR and partners welcome first meeting of Sudan and South Sudan on solutions to displacement

4, December 2020

Khartoum – Representatives of the governments of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan agreed this week on a regional roadmap which will outline the next steps toward medium to long-term solutions for seven million forcibly displaced persons originating from and hosted by the two countries, and other States hosting displaced populations from both countries.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), currently chaired by Sudan, UNHCR, the Refugee Agency and partners, welcomed the conclusions of this first technical-level meeting, building on the unprecedented opportunity to find lasting solutions for displaced persons from the two countries. The solution strategies will include refugees, IDPs, returnees and host populations and be advanced through the established IGAD Support Platform launched at the Global Refugee Forum.

“It is a historic moment, for the two governments to come together in search for solutions for their populations” noted Ambassador Mohamed Abdi Affey, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa. ‘We have recently seen impressive developments towards solutions. We have a practical and cordial working relationship between the two governments. We have a roadmap. Now we must work together to show the world that to invest in this process is to light a candle for enduring peace, sustainable return and a hopeful future for the people of South Sudan and Sudan.’

The representatives from Sudan and South Sudan highlighted that the uniqueness of the joint initiative on solutions to displacement stems from the complementarity of the two comprehensive peace agreements, including the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement concluded on 3 October 2020, and the continued efforts in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed on 12 September 2018. The governments stressed the need to anchor the initiative within their respective peace deals, which, critically, provide for solutions for refugees, IDPs and returnees.

In the spirit of the peace process, the governments agreed to “a people centered approach,” prioritizing the rehabilitation and recovery needs of Sudan’s and South Sudan’s displaced peoples. They agreed that both governments should work to create conditions conducive for voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return while simultaneously working to implement innovative solutions which enhance the quality for asylum in the two countries.

Ms. Fathia Alwan, the IGAD Director for Health and Social Development noted that the inception workshop was a start of multi-year journey as durable solutions are long-term endeavors that requires concerted efforts by all parties and acknowledged the support of the core group members including the European Union, Germany, the World Bank, GIZ and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She



reiterated that the IGAD Support Platform will be the ideal vehicle to advance the solution strategies for the Sudan and South Sudan displacement situations.

Building on the good practices of the Nairobi Process, and the commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum a year ago, the meeting concluded with an outline of the next steps in the roadmap. This includes national consultations to develop solutions strategies in the respective countries to culminate in a joint comprehensive plan of action. The comprehensive plan of action will subsequently be submitted for review and endorsement during the forthcoming IGAD Heads of State Special Summit planned for the first quarter of 2021, aimed at seeking agreement on the early recovery and longer-term peacebuilding and resilience needs of both Sudan and South Sudan.

Both the Sudan and South Sudan delegations emphasized the need to include refugee and IDP voices at all stages of the solutions initiative to ensure the meaningful role conflict-affected communities have in peace efforts.

Mr. Hans Stausboll, the EU Head of Unit for East and Horn of Africa welcomed the conclusions of the meeting and reiterated EU's commitment to support the initiative.

UNHCR committed to supporting the respective governments in their efforts to create the conditions on the ground that will permit safe and sustainable return and integration, and called for a scaling up of development support in areas of potential refugee and IDP return.

The first inception meeting was organised by IGAD in coordination with UNHCR and with the support of the European Union, the World Bank, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), GIZ and UNDP.

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